



Submission No 44

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

Organisation: AusAID

Questions from Ms Gai Brodtmann MP for AusAID witnesses

Question 1

By how much do you expect AusAID's overseas representation, A-based and locally engaged, to grow over the next few years?

- In the context of strain on accommodation at posts on page 11 [*of the AusAID Submission at Attachment D*] you foresee your operations growing to meet the commitment to increase the aid program to 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16.
- Would DFAT also have to expect to face growing demands as a result?

Proposed AusAID response

As AusAID's growth continues on this trajectory, it will continue to seek support from DFAT under the Service Level Agreement in relation to accommodation (office and housing) and ICT services, including computer-based systems such as internet and email, as well as land line and mobile telephone communications. The service level agreement allows DFAT to charge AusAID more as our staff grow at post. Where DFAT is not able to provide this support, AusAID is able to provide these services itself as it has done, for example, in Jakarta.

Question 2

The role of LES has clearly evolved in your overseas operations – you say “AusAID is able to make greater use of LES than some agencies operating overseas because a considerable portion of AusAID's work is unclassified” [page 13 *of the AusAID Submission at Attachment C*].

- Unclassified is not always the same as sensitive or potentially controversial: could you indicate whether LES are able to take on work previously done by A-based, beyond the “technical advice and expertise” you mention?

Proposed AusAID response

As AusAID's written submission states, the role of LES is focused on providing “technical advice and expertise for the development and implementation of the aid program”.

LES work side by side with A-based staff managing Australia's aid program overseas. LES, together with A-based officers, represent AusAID in fora that engage our partners in development including other Australian Government agencies, partner government officials, other donors, NGOs and civil society.

However it is not always possible nor appropriate for LES to be involved in sensitive or potentially controversial discussions about the aid program. At posts, decisions are made by senior management on a case by case basis, as to the nature and therefore security classification of the discussion. This then determines attendance by appropriate officers including staff with a relevant security clearance.